

christ jesus, you  
are amongst us  
so humble.

born of mary,  
cared of joseph,  
dependent of Spirit,  
You are Free.

unto You, we  
ask our Birth.



via pacem  
(the way of peace)  
Des Moines Catholic  
Worker House  
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## A Call to Fast

Despite the change in national administration, it is doubtful that the next four years will see any major changes in terms of a humanitarian defense policy. In an analysis of the Carter personality and promise, Newsweek magazine (9/13/76) predicts "a gradually rising defense budget", and a general continuation of present military policies.

In hopes of establishing a more humane defense policy, especially in regards to the costly and unnecessary B-1 bomber, we ask those who are able to join us in a three day fast. In fasting January 18-20, timed to precede the inauguration, we accept the burden of this military insanity on ourselves. This denial to ourselves of a basic human necessity, food, also unifies us with those who in many ways are denied a decent life by our military presence.

In the past three congressional sessions, the World Peace Fund Act was introduced, which would give taxpayers who oppose war a legal alternative to paying taxes for military purposes. If approved, the Fund would be used for peace related projects. Presently, legislation is hampered by limited funds and support. For more information, write: World Peace Tax Fund, 2111 Florida Ave. NW, Washington DC 20008, or see Joe at the house.

## Winter Discussions

Part of the Catholic Worker tradition is the "round table discussion" where people join together to verbalize and clarify thoughts. Mass is celebrated almost every Friday at the house (713 Indiana, one block north of University between 7th and 8th) at 8 pm, followed by a discussion.

- Dec. 10: The discussion will be pre-empted for a pre-wedding celebration for Malcolm MacKenzie.  
Dec. 17: Marriage, Divorce and the Catholic Church, with Rev. Mr. Mike O'Meara.  
Dec. 24 and 31: no discussions  
Jan. 7: The Sanctity of Life, with Rosemary Abbott of Birthright.  
Jan. 14: Non-Violent Reform in India; a recent immigrant speaks from her personal experience.  
Jan. 21: Hospitality and the Catholic Worker; Frank and Joe lead a discussion of life at the Catholic Worker House.  
Jan. 28: Traditional Irish Folk Songs; Sr. Eve Cavanaugh shares the music and legends of her homeland.

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## on hospitality

She came and left so quickly, we barely met her. She huddled her bags close to her, and nervously shifted from chair to chair. Finally in a scream of frustration, she shoveled down a barely heated meal, hurriedly picked up her bags, and left, barely acknowledging she had ever been here.

Anna's visit was very short, but long enough to mirror another flaw in our own personalities: our personal paranoia. Anna showed us how we all build our personal defences higher and stronger. We place our quadraphonic stereo headphones, barbed wire fences, and solid state color TV sets between ourselves and any form of true community.

At least that's one of the many pressures we all deal with daily. Here in our close quarters,



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## Community

it becomes more apparent and more destructive to our modest attempts at community. We must let down the barriers so that we may touch, feel, and build a community. The chances for injury are great, but the seed of self must die in order to yield growth of community.

Stark words, but even in our small world here, many have given a special part of themselves. Part of this death to our own selves is to admit that we have a responsibility to share what is dear to us, beyond our own excess, and part of our own necessity.

We pray for all those who take time from their families and regular "pre-occupations" to join us in our work here, especially Helen Tichey, Ron Wells, Ed Polich, Fr. John Zietler and Peggy Golden. And as the stark death and life of winter grows on us, two new members will join our life in community. Joanne Hall, who is interested in opening a house of hospitality in Dubuque next year, will spend part of the Christmas season with us. One of our regular visitors from the extended community, Ed Polich, will live with us on a more permanent basis in January. Ed will help take up the slack as Malcolm MacKenzie moves out to begin married life with Drury.

We also thank Prairie Farms Dairy, Colonial Bakery, Ben's Market and Stotts Homemade (continued on page 7)

# A Midrash of the Catholic Worker Positions, part 1

This is not expected to be any great and new revelation on the Catholic Worker positions. It is only an attempt on my part to articulate and clarify in my own language and idiom the long standing Catholic Worker positions, whose language in places serves as a stumbling block instead of an enabler in revealing the Worker message. I do not pretend to write the final commentary on the subject. I hope in some way to be opening up the positions to a broader and wider circle of people and pointing the way to a more serious discussion of the positions as an authentic vehicle for changing our society.

"The general aim of the Catholic Worker Movement is to realize in the individual and in society the expressed and implied teaching of Christ. It must, therefore, begin with an analysis of our present society to determine whether we already have an order that meets with the requirements of justice and charity of Christ."

Key words: to realize; the Catholic Worker has always been based in a "this worldly" context. The challenge of the Gospel is on this side of the grave. We are to take Christ just as seriously on the cross as we are to take him Easter Sunday.



in the individual and in society; to hold both the individual and society accountable in their juxtaposition under the same criteria, Christ's teaching is the root of Peter Maurin's personalism. What is good for one is good for the other. The person is both an individual and part of the collective. The person of Christ calls for a response from the whole person. There cannot be a set of different rules for both the individual and society. Persons are expected to respond to Christ's call in their wholeness.

expressed and implied teaching

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of Christ; in scripture we have guidelines that give us direction in our dealings with persons. We must remember that to respond to persons is to respond to the individual and the collective. The guidelines are the same for both. Within the scripture itself there are expressed applications of Christ's teachings (e.g. the corporal works of mercy expressed in Matt. 25:35-37) and implied applications of Christ's teachings (e.g. the beatitudes in Matt. 5). We are to transfer Christ's teaching to our own time, place and person--individual and collective.

analysis; the need to analyze,

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to critique is of the utmost importance. To evaluate, one needs a measuring stick. The measuring stick must be something which is outside of that which you wish to evaluate. The measuring stick of our society--the collective as well as the individual--must be the teachings of Christ. In this article we will deal with the critique. In part II we will deal with the Catholic Worker answer: an answer that tries to use Christ as the measuring stick.

"The society in which we live and which is generally called capitalist (because of its method of producing wealth) and bourgeois (because of the prevalent mentality) is not in accord with justice and charity..."

Key words: capitalist; a word that carries with it many deep ingrained biases and feelings, most of which have very little to do with the real world, the world we live in. Like its counterpart "communism," it is meant to elicit an immediate response of polarization and patriotism. It is credited with everything from putting a man on the moon to killing off the American Indian.

By the word "capitalist," we mean to speak of the method of producing wealth or creating surplus capital to be re-invested. (continued on page 6)

## POSITIONS

"Today's worker is paid not in the terms of the worth of his labor or skill, but is paid a portion of it, called a wage, and the difference which he does not get is called a profit and is taken from him by the owner of the productive process as a tribute."

Now, it is not hard to see that to begin a capitalist form of economy some people must have more than others in order to initiate a business venture. It would appear that both owner and worker would benefit from this arrangement and society on the whole would grow. Those who have the necessary capital would invest and make a living from their investment and those with no capital are provided jobs. The beauty of the system is that it is not static but is dynamic, as owners acquire more tribute from the labor of the workers, they may re-invest this new-found capital in a new business venture that, in turn, creates new jobs.

It may be debated historically whether society has benefited more from our capitalist system than it has been hindered, but now it is the time to analyze. Implicit in capitalism's dynamic is the concentration of the tribute of labor or wealth or capital in the hands of the very few.

Today, about 2% of the American population has enough capital to invest in any kind of business venture small or big. The vastness of enterprises has brought into being corporations--beings that exist devoid of persons. They have

grown to such a vastness that the very few control the majority of all wealth.

These corporations run generally by the same motivation that persons/owners would run their own businesses--to receive maximum profit to re-invest for maximum growth. The sole determining factor in what is right or wrong is profit and growth. The common good and the individual's good are sacrificed so much so that we are now unable to address the obvious injustices of our economic system from within our present physical and mental economic structure. These injustices proclaim 6% of the world population raping 40% of the usable resources, owning the biggest gun in the world, importing up to 50% of the raw resources for our economy but exporting less than 1% of our GNP and allowing 1 out of every 8 Americans to be on or below the poverty line. The person is not in control of his/her society. In our present economic system the person has no way to hold the system accountable.

bourgeois; it is defined in the dictionary as middle-class. We use it here to address the prevailing mentality of most individuals in our capitalist system, rich and poor alike. It follows suit that in a capitalist system, most people deaden the corporate aspect of the wholeness of person which also must infect the individual aspect of that personhood.

Unlike the original bourgeois, who were restricted to a par-

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ticular socio-economic class, we speak of a neo-bourgeois that covers all classes in our society from the very rich to the very poor. This attitude infects the individual with a mentality of heathen idolatry. Unable to have any real control of their lives (both the rich and poor), the individual sets his/her sights on the shallow rewards that the system must provide to keep itself going. The system runs by itself, without persons, now that both the collective and the individual are completely out of the picture. Individuals judge themselves by how much they can consume and how much power they may have over others.

The individual with a bourgeois mentality is held check by its overwhelming fear of insecurity. The only security they believe in is the security passed out and controlled by the economic system. Again, this is security out of the individual's/ collective's control.

is not in accord with justice and charity; a definite judgement

## ON HOSPITALITY

Donuts for openly donating their wares to the house. We also have unmet regular needs for food staples, especially peanut butter, margerine, mayonnaise, whole wheat flour and brown rice. All contributions of money go for keeping the bills paid and contract mortgage payments ahead of schedule. We still owe over \$4,500 dollars on our property.

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on the system as a whole. But notice, this judgement could come from any truth-seeking person with an ability to look below the surface analytical efforts of the traditional liberal (Democratic) and conservative (Republican) points of view. Our system is not in accord with justice and charity by anybody's standards.

Christ's standards call for something radical. Not that a Christian critique would differ with any humanistic socialist's critique; we see the same world. It is the means of achieving a just society that the Catholic Worker differs with most so called radical approaches to changing society. Christ, being the way, showed us the way. Christ, being the end, showed us the means. Means--end--the way--one in the same.

In my second article, I hope to articulate what I see are the "Catholic Worker means" in reaching a desired society: a society "where it is easier for a man to be good;" man--the person, collective and individual.

--Frank Cordaro

As we join with our friends celebrate Christmas, let us remember that Christ's birth lead to his ultimate sacrifice of self in the crucifixion. Let us make our sacrifice of self this Christmas be a sign of the birth of a new Christian community.

--Joe Da Via

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WE WERE NOT ASKED

No one asked us to do this work. The mayor of the city did not come and ask us to run a bread line or a hospice to supplement the municipal lodging house. Nor did the Bishop or Cardinal ask that we help out the Catholic Charities in their endeavor to help the poor. No one asked us to start an agency or an institution of any kind. On our responsibility, because we are our brother's keeper, because of a sense of personal responsibility, we began to try to see Christ in each one that came to us. If a man came hungry, there was always something in the ice box. If he needed a bed and we were crowded, there was always a quarter around to buy a bed on the Bowery. If he needed clothes, there were our friends to be appealed to, after we had taken the extra coat out of the closet first, of course. It might be someone else's coat but that was all right too.

--Dorothy Day

